

Town Administrator's Report

March 10, 2015

Among the areas and issues to which we have devoted our attention, time and energy – since the last Regular Town Board Meeting – are:

County Reimbursement – Following the interest and instructions of the Board, at the last mtg, the County budget documents that appeared to have relevance to Town expenditures that were arguably reimbursable were scrutinized. The task was made somewhat challenging insofar as the documents – as received from the County – were generally vague and required some intuitive deduction – a reading between the lines. Thus far, there appeared to be three (3) areas that could be isolated: Economic Development, Animal Control and Public Health. The amount claimed is based on the Town's contribution to the County Budget which represents 24% of that budget. As the Memo to the Board discussed:

Economic Development – In-line skate marathon, point-to-La Pointe swim, bi-lingual signage and others can be argued to fall under economic development – the argument is based on the County investment in the Ashland Chamber of Commerce. The amount to be claimed is: \$ 7,200.00

Animal Control – Law enforcement spends time, equipment and resources to respond to animal control issues that can fairly be argued should fall under the responsibility of Animal Control. The amount claimed is: \$ 4,320.00

Public Health – This represents the Town's subsidy of the Clinic which suggests it provides services that would otherwise fall under the umbrella of County Public Health. The amount claimed is: \$ 25,000.00

Thus far the amount isolated is: \$ 36,520.00

We will continue to scrutinize the budget and request clarifying documentation to either confirm or exclude line items for reimbursement. The Board will be updated on progress on a regular basis.

Formalizing and Codifying Project and Contract Processes and

Responsibilities – Working with the Administrative Assistant and assembling past checklists and waivers (Hold Harmless, etc.) we are putting together a packet of information that will be circulated among departments and independent entities (ex: library) to ensure that everyone involved in or initiating a project or contract has a clear inventory of necessary steps – their sequence and requirements – along

with the individuals with ‘buck stops here’ responsibility. The object is to ensure that all projects and potential contracts progress thoughtfully and comprehensively from start to finish so that the Town can avoid situations in which there are omissions in either process, documentation or notification. The project is nearing a reviewable draft stage and will be presented to the Board for review when a draft is completed.

Insurance Issues – We have been working closely with our insurance carriers and adjusters to respond to the fire that consumed the Ford 550 – 2-ton truck. The truck has been examined by adjusters, removed from the Town’s insurance roster and valuations made by Gladfelter. Questions arose about the inclusion of the sand spreader and whether it might be retained --- we were advised it could be, but a deduction from the valuation would be required. The Board will be considering that matter at this evening’s meeting.

Harbor Issues – The deadline for the submission of the 3-year Harbor Statement of Intentions is April 1. With that in mind, the Harbor Committee met and, for the first time in a couple years, thoroughly re-examined the projects that would be included in the Statement. The exercise appears to be largely pro forma insofar as the Governor has cut funding to the Harbor Assistance Program by something akin to \$ 12+M, but it remains important to meet the deadlines for document submission should funds become available. In addition, issues related to the expansion of harbor dredge limits and the potential extension of the dock at Joni’s Beach were taken up --- all of these issues will be considered by the Board at the meeting.

Safety Training – We are working closely with the Public Works Dept to revamp, revise and update employee safety training to ensure compliance with state and OSHA requirements. Public Works has a training session scheduled for May which may be attended by other departments and employees. In addition, we are working on a matrix by which it can be readily understood as to currency of training, employee and department requirements, etc., in order to have all documents and information available for inspection by relevant oversight bodies.

Personnel Issues – We have, and continue to, deal with several personnel issues. We have been in communication with state offices and our legal counsel to ensure appropriate response and the timely assembling and distribution of documents and requests for public records. It is anticipated that resolution to these matters should be able to be accomplished in the not-to-distant future.

Potential Collaborative Revenue Issues: In addition to the initiative by which we seek collaboration and contribution to mitigate the Town’s ice rescue expense

(we are awaiting appearance before the Bayfield County Board to seek an appropriation to support ice rescue activities – after which documents, lines of demarcation and agreements will be developed and submitted to the Board for approval prior to being submitted to the relevant organization or entity), we have begun discussions about the mitigation of sole expense for ice road maintenance. The marked increase in traffic on the ice road, due largely to substantially greater marketing efforts related to winter festivals, activities and, of course, the ice caves, points up the idea that the ice road is becoming more and more a regional asset for which some regional support would be valuable to mitigating sole responsibility for cost to the Town. This having been said, it is clearly understood that the Town's winter transportation safety concerns rely on having one (1) winter transportation/ice road czar, nonetheless, with the Board's approval and instruction, it may be valuable to approach Bayfield – either the city or their chamber – for some modest contribution to maintenance and upkeep – particularly as it relates to the approach on the Bayfield side. Finally, a portion of the cost of maintenance and upkeep may well be considered as a viable and legitimate expenditure from the revenues generated by the Room Tax since the ice road is being far more frequently used by visitors who may well stay overnight. It is an issue the Board may wish to discuss and consider for the future.

Communication – It may have been noticed by the Board that there has been a marked increase in memoranda and attachments related to issues that have arisen or with which we are contending. This process will continue in order that the Board is kept fully abreast of developments and challenges that may confront the Town. The response, to date, has been positive.